ENGL 363: Portable Shakespeare

Professor Christine Hoffmann
MWF 2:30-3:20
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"Shakespeare makes modern culture, and modern culture makes Shakespeare."

-Marjorie Garber

In her introduction to *Shakespeare and Modern Culture*, Marjorie Garber compares the relationship between Shakespeare and modernity to M.C. Escher's well-known image, *Drawing Hands*: so "**modern culture writes the plays of Shakespeare** in works that range from fiction to film to plays to the daily news - while, **at the same time, Shakespeare writes the modern culture in which we think we live**."

In this course, we'll approach the plays of Shakespeare as both historical artifacts and portable productions that have been, over and over, restaged, revised, redrawn, and otherwise reimagined in countless different contexts.

So, along with reading **four plays** by Shakespeare and the **sonnets**, you'll study **adaptations of Shakespeare** in a variety of forms: at least one video game, several films, three modern plays, and a sprinkling of visual art. We'll explore Shakespeare's enduring involvement in modern culture at the same time as we discuss his participation in early modern debates over identity, civility, the impacts of art, and the influences of power.

COURSE TEXTS

Much Ado About Nothing
Othello
Hamlet
The Tempest

Keith Hamilton Cobb, *American Moor*
James Ijames, *Fat Ham*
Madeline Sayet, *Where We Belong*
Golden Glitch Games, *Elsinore*

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Develop skills in reading and analyzing Shakespeare's poetry and drama
2. Gain familiarity with recent trends in early modern scholarship
3. Investigate Shakespeare's place in modern and popular culture
4. Discover opportunities to contribute to both academic and public conversations about Shakespeare, through class discussion, self-directed research, and multimodal projects

ENGL 631: Studies in Nonfiction Prose, Pamphlet Cultures

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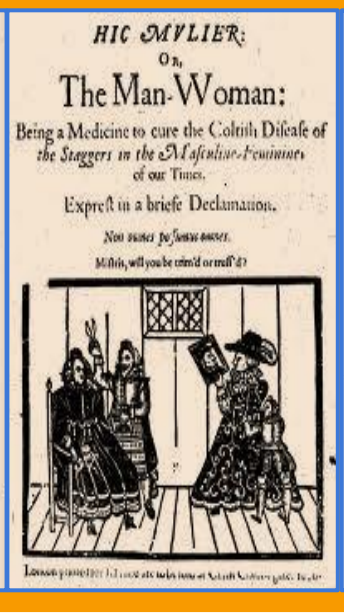

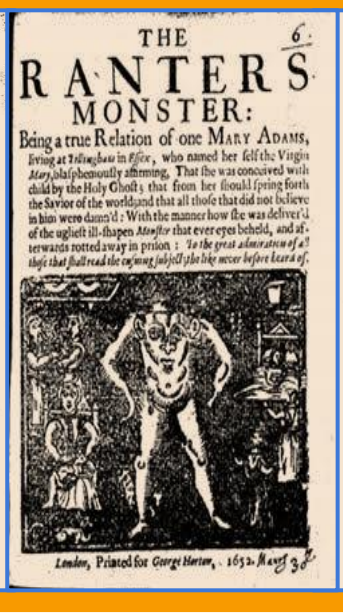

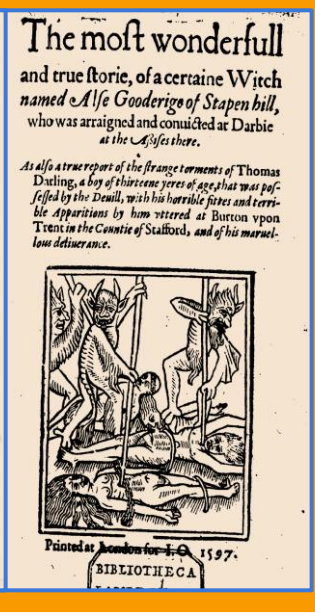

English 631 undertakes advanced study in the genre of nonfiction. We will focus our investigation of the genre on **the cheap print of early modern pamphlet culture**, concentrating on the outlaw, outcast, outspoken and/or generally outrageous figures of the 16th and 17th centuries. The prose devoted to these figures promised "strange ***and*** true" reports of their secret languages, obscure rituals, impassioned complaints and providential confidences.

That "***and***", we'll come to see, is important. To encounter the conventions of this peculiar genre is to encounter the convolutions of Renaissance social politics. Pamphlets, on the surface, offer portraits of **rogues, malcontents, deviants, criminals and demonized others**, but they are formally a space where the compatibilities between the elite and the underclass are exposed. ***"He that cannot dissemble cannot live,"*** writes the 16th-century pamphleteer Robert Greene in one of his popular cony-catching pamphlets. These pamphlets serve a dual function, introducing cony-catchers (who specialized in cheating victims, or *conies*, at cards) as figures of both danger and romance. Moreover, the identities of victim and criminal are always overlapping in Greene's descriptions of London's criminal underbelly. In mystifying the notion of what it is to live uprightly, Greene suggests that the process by which an honest citizen (or an honest reader) lives honestly may require certain strategies of dishonesty.

COURSE TOPICS

- **Rogues and Sturdy Beggars**
- **Shrews and Gossips**
- **Witches**
- **Monstrous Births and Fashion Monsters**
- **Hacks and Railers**

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Demonstrate skill in reading and analyzing 16th- & 17th-century British nonfiction.
2. Understand the major formal conventions of pamphlets & the cultural/historical contexts of pamphleteering.
3. Exhibit proficiency in research methods and respond to scholarly conversations within early modern scholarship.
4. Compose well-supported, persuasive, and creative interpretations of course texts.